

**GOVERNMENT OF ANDHRA PRADESH**  
**ABSTRACT**

Rural Development Department – Constitution of Society for Social Audit, Accountability & Transparency (SSAAT)- Orders Issued.

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**PANCHAYAT RAJ & RURAL DEVELOPMENT (RD.II) DEPARTMENT**

G.O.Ms.No. 155

Dated: 13-05-2009

Read the following:

1. G.O Ms.No.27 PR&RD (RD.II) Dept., Dt.28.01.2006
2. Govt., Memo No. 417/RD II/A1/2007-1, PR & RD (RD.II) Dept., Dt.18.1.2007
3. G.O Ms.No.550, PR&RD (RD II) Dept., Dt.06.12.2007
4. G.O Ms.No.317, PR&RD (RDII) Dept., Dt.22.08.2008
5. G.O.Ms.No.153 PR & RD (RD.II) Dept., Dt.12.05.2009.

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**ORDER**

Government have taken up a number of initiatives for elimination of poverty. The success of the poverty elimination programme primarily depend on the active participation of the poor, the transparency with which the programs are implemented and the social accountability systems that are put in place.

2. Government of India have in the recent past passed two Acts, the Right to Information Act, 2005 and the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, 2005 which are intended to address the above issues and bring back the focus on the rural poor as the primary stake-holders. The RTI Act, 2005 enables the establishment of an unprecedented regime of right to information for the citizens of the country and aims to ensure maximum openness and transparency in the machinery and functioning of Government at all levels – Central, State and local. The NREG Act 2005 gives a legal guarantee of wage employment to earn a living with dignity for the poor.

3. Both the Acts have included many provisions to ensure greater participation of the community in monitoring governmental activities through the Panchayats and Gramsabhas. Both have opened up important spaces for citizens' actions. The Government of AP intended to further strengthen these spaces through the window of "Social Audit" under NREG Act 2005.

4. The NREGA, 2005 emphasizes on transparency and accountability in every aspect of implementation of the scheme to ensure that the benefits reach the poor beneficiaries for whom it is meant. Section 17 of the Act provides for conduct of regular 'Social Audits' at different stages of implementation of the scheme so as to ensure transparency and accountability. "Social Audit of a Scheme", means auditing of a scheme by the primary stakeholders, in this case by the beneficiaries of the NREGS, the labourers.

5. In Andhra Pradesh, Social Audits are being conducted in all the Districts since July 2006. Social audits are conducted by village social auditors who are literate youth from labourers' families trained in social audit processes. The process is facilitated by resource persons drawn from civil society organisations.

[P.T.O]

6. Social Audit has been found to be a powerful anti corruption tool and an effective Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) mechanism. It has increased the awareness of the labourers about their rights and entitlements under NREGS and encouraged public participation in the implementation of the Scheme leading to strengthening of the program. The scope of social audit in AP has suddenly opened up a great opportunity for the poor to seek an active role in all programmes that purportedly are targeted for them. The new scale of operations demands an institutional arrangement for implementation.

7. Also the sine qua non of a successful social audit process is that it has to be conducted in an impartial and objective manner, independent of the implementing agency and provide a platform for the rural poor to express their opinions about the implementation of schemes that affect their lives.

8. Therefore, for ensuring the integrity and objectivity of the social audit processes, Government after careful consideration of the matter have decided to establish an independent and autonomous body, Society for Social Audit, Accountability and Transparency (SSAAT). The Society which will be independent of the mainstream administrative machinery shall be responsible for facilitating conduct of the social audit by the rural poor.

9. The Society will evolve as a sensitive support organisation for Rural Development Department or any other Department to carry out social audits of NREGS and other anti – poverty / welfare programs of the Department of Rural Development and other Departments of the Government. The Society in response to the requests from the Government Departments will develop appropriate tools and methodologies for facilitating the rural poor in conducting social auditing of specific programs, train and facilitate the conduct of social audit of the NREGS – AP and other Welfare / Development Schemes. It shall be the core activity of the Society. The Society will be responsible for developing guidelines, rules and manuals for social audits, bring on board all stake holders and ensure that the Social Audit is a means of strengthening the programme. The Society will also be responsible for overseeing the follow up action based on the social audit reports by the concerned departments.

10. With regards to the social auditing of NREGS-AP, the Commissioner Rural Development Department shall enter into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Social Audit Society, which will include the terms and conditions for the conduct of social audits. Similarly, the Society can enter into a MOU with any Department of Government of AP for the conduct of Social Audits covering the programs of the concerned Department, subject to the acceptance to adhere to the non-negotiable aspects of the Social Audits which are – Social Audit should reflect the views of all the stakeholders, the process has to be transparent and all relevant information should be accessible to the people, if gaps are identified in the process then action will have to be taken. The Society will also develop resource material and take up training of resource persons and village social auditors.

11. The Society will be governed by a Governing Body not exceed 13 members. The Governing Body shall consist of 4 ex-officio members such as the Principal Secretary, RD, Commissioner, RD, Chief Executive Officer, Society for Elimination of Rural Poverty and the

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Secretary of the Society. 9 persons of eminence in their individual capacity shall be nominated by the ex-officio members for a term of 3 years. Criteria for such nomination shall be a minimum of 10 years of experience in rights based approach, in working on the grassroots' peoples' issues and rural poverty eradication. The vacancies in the membership or addition of new members shall be made by the Governing Body as laid down in these rules / byelaws. The Governing Body will provide overall policy guidance to the Society and in shaping and articulating the vision of the Society. The Governing Body will appoint an Executive Committee which shall consist of a minimum of 9 members to carry out the mandate of the Governing Body. The Governing Body will be chaired by the Principal Secretary, RD.

12. The budget for the Social Audit Society for the conduct of Social Audits of the NREGS-AP will be drawn from the state EGS budget. For this purpose, 0.5% of the yearly NREGS budget will be allocated for the conduct of Social Audits and other transparency measures as indicated in the Government Order in the reference 5<sup>th</sup> read above. Similarly, the Society shall collect the necessary fees from other Departments and Schemes as and when they conduct Social Audits for them.

13. The Social Audit Rules passed by the State Government and notified vide AP State Gazette Notification No.4 of Panchayat Raj & Rural Development Dept., dt: 26.08.2009 shall be followed in letter and spirit by the Society.

14. A copy of this order is available on the internet and can be accessed at the address <http://www.rd.ap.gov.in> .

(BY ORDER AND IN THE NAME OF THE GOVERNOR OF ANDHRA PRADESH)

K.RAJU,  
PRINCIPAL SECRETARY TO GOVERNMENT

To

The Commissioner, Rural Development, AP., Hyderabad

The Director (EGS) O/o the Commissioner (RD), Hyderabad.

The Director, SPIU-RD, DWCRA Building, Lower Tank Bund Road, Hyderabad.

The District Programme CO-ordinator and District Collector.

All Project Directors, DWMA

The Chief Executive Officer, SERP, A.P., Hyderabad.

**Copy to :**

All Secretaries / Principal Secretaries / Special Chief Secretaries to the Government.

The Secretary, PR & RD, Govt., of A.P., Hyderabad.

The PS to Minister (RD), Govt., of A.P., Hyderabad.

The PS to Prl. Secretary, RD, Govt., of A.P., Hyderabad.

PR & RD (Genl) Department. (2 copies)

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SECTION OFFICER